



441 Freedom Parkway NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

<http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov>

## **Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs: A Guide to Its Records at the Jimmy Carter Library**

### **Collection Summary**

Creator: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

Title: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

Dates: 1977 - 1981

Quantity: 103.75 linear feet (60 linear feet 5 linear inches open for research), 138 containers

Identification:

Accession Number: 80-1

National Archives Identifier: 583400

Scope and Content:

The Records of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

The records include newspaper clipping, memos, reports, correspondence, briefing books, speeches, testimony, calendars, telephone logs, itineraries, invitations, and press materials. The material reflects the efforts of the Carter Administration to serve the interests of American consumers. The collection contains the papers of the Director, Esther Peterson, who served as the Special Assistant advising the President, and other members of the office staff. These materials describe the daily operation of the office and its work in the area of consumer affairs both nationally and internationally.

Creator Information: Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

The Office of Consumer Affairs was created by Executive Order 11583 on February 24, 1971. It was formed as an Office within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). During the Carter administration, Esther Peterson was director and served as the Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. This office advised the President on the analysis and coordination of Federal activities in the area of consumer affairs and recommended solutions for improving the effectiveness of governmental consumer programs. In addition, the office handled numerous consumer complaints submitted by American citizens. The Special Assistant served as a consumer spokesperson and advocate on the President's personal staff, along with helping to promote and pass consumer legislation. Other members of the office included Midge Shubow, Jean Perwin, and Ed Cohen.

[Biographical information](#) on key office personnel is located at the end of the finding aid.

Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with applicable executive order(s), which governs National Security policies, applicable statutes/agency restrictions, and material which has been closed in accordance with the donor's deed of gift.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction: Copyright interest in these papers has been donated to the United States Government. Some of the records may be subject to copyright restrictions (i.e. newspapers, publications, etc.). Researchers should contact the publisher for further information.

Related Material:

Related materials in this repository: White House Central File, Subject Files - Department of Health, Education and Welfare (FG 22), White House Central File, Subject Files - Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Consumer Affairs (FG 22-2), Exit Interview: Esther Peterson

Related materials in other repository: Records of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Consumer Affairs held by NARA

Separated material: Various audio-visual materials have been transferred to the Library's Audio-Visual Department. Separation of these items from the textual materials is noted by the placement of transfer sheets within the appropriate folders.

Index Terms:

Limited to major topics under each category  
Persons: Esther Peterson

Organizations: Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), American National Metric Council, Federal Trade Commission, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United States Office of Consumer Affairs

Subjects: Consumer affairs, food, automobiles, business, consumer product safety, economy, education, elderly, energy, exports, health care, housing, hunger, inflation, and legislation

Places: Japan, Korea

Types of Material: Newspaper clipping, memos, reports, correspondence, briefing books, speeches, testimony, calendars, telephone logs, itineraries, invitations and press materials

Administrative Information:

Preferred citation: [Type of Document], [Names of Sender and Recipient or Title of Document], [Date], [Collection Title], [Series Title], [Folder Title], [Box Number], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Acquisition information: These historical materials were received under provisions of the instrument of gift that Jimmy Carter signed January 31, 1981.

Processing information: The first series of the collection was opened in 2015. The open dates are indicated in the series descriptions.

Preservation information: Some items have been transferred to the Library's Audio-Visual Department for preservation.

System of Arrangement:

The Records of the Office of the Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs are divided into four series:

<b>Series Title</b>	<b>National Archives Identifier</b>
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Subject Files</a>	585989
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Briefing Book Files</a>	20739645
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Speeches/Testimony Files</a>	20739646
<a href="#">Esther Peterson's Correspondence Files</a>	20739647
<a href="#">Jean Perwin's Subject Files</a>	586006
<a href="#">Michael Kerr's Subject Files</a>	586002
<a href="#">Midge Shubow's Subject Files</a>	586000

**Detailed Description of the Collection**

[Esther Peterson's Subject Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 1-69. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, lists, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, resumes, and press materials. Topics include energy, farming, food, consumer complaints, health, housing, inflation, and legislation. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

[Esther Peterson's Briefing Book Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 70-75. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains the contents of various briefing books used in presentations and meetings. The briefing books deal with issues of consumer interests both nationally and internationally. The material consists of reports, lists, fact sheet, and memos. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

[Esther Peterson's Speeches/Testimony Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 76-97. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains newspaper clippings, itineraries, speeches, testimonies, invitations, correspondence, memos and

drafts of speeches. The material has been arranged with subject folders followed by dated speech materials. The subject folders are arranged alphabetically by folder title, the dated speech materials arranged chronologically.

#### **Esther Peterson's Correspondence Files**

Scope and Content: Containers 98-119. This series was opened in 2015. This series contains letters, correspondence, and postcards. The material consists of public mail and official correspondence. The material is arranged by type of correspondence and chronologically there under.

#### **Jean Perwin's Subject Files**

Scope and Content: Containers 120-124. This series was opened in October 2017. The series contains correspondence, legislation, congressional records, newspaper articles, promotional material, surveys, memoranda, and court cases. Topics include inflation, price ceilings, government spending, antitrust laws, coupons, credit privacy, diplomatic immunity, patents and comparison shopping. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

#### **Michael Kerr's Subject Files**

Scope and Content: Containers 125-128. This series was opened in October 2017. The series contains correspondence, legislation, reports, studies, newspaper articles, memoranda, promotional materials, and congressional records. Topics include citizen participation in governmental proceedings, agency regulation reform, and consumer controversies resolution. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

#### **Midge Shubow's Subject Files**

Scope and Content: Containers 129-138. This series was opened in November 2017. The series contains articles, correspondence, press releases, transcripts, legislation, and public mail. Topics include the consumer protection agency bill, advertising, administration, inflation, food labelling, diet, consumer education, corporation ethics, and taxes. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Return to series list](#)

## **Container List**

### **Esther Peterson's Subject Files**

#### **Container 1**

Abortion  
ACTION  
Administrative File  
Advertising  
Advertising Cases [1]  
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Advertising (Children's)  
Advocates  
Agricultural Council of America  
Air Travel  
Airline Deregulation  
American Automobile Association  
American Consumer Association  
American Council of Life Insurance  
AFL-CIO  
American Home Economics Association

#### **Container 2**

American National Metric Council [1]  
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AT and T Issues  
Anti-Inflation Memos/Reports  
Appropriate Community Technology - 1979 Fair Conference to Feature Model Community  
Article on People Power - The New Republic  
Article on People Power - Ralph Nader  
Australia  
Auto Policy  
Auto Repairs  
Auto cap (Rich Cuffe at Office of Consumer Assistance)  
Autographs for Drug and Grocery Chain Manufacturers  
Automobile Owners Action Council  
Automobiles  
Background Materials  
Backhauling

#### **Container 3**

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Bills  
B'nai B'rith Women

Brazil  
British  
Budget - USOCA [1]  
Budget - USOCA [2]  
Budget - USOCA [3]  
Bumpers Amendment  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms  
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#### **Container 4**

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Business or Organization - C [3]  
Business or Organization - D  
Business or Organization - E

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Business or Organization - F  
Business or Organization - G  
Business or Organization - H  
Business or Organization - I  
Business or Organization - J  
Business or Organization - K  
Business or Organization - L  
Business or Organization - M  
Business or Organization - N [1]  
Business or Organization - N [2]  
Business or Organization - N [3]  
Business or Organization - O

#### **Container 6**

Business or Organization - P  
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Business or Organization - T  
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Business or Organization - V  
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Business Roundtable  
Business Speech Material

Buying Alert  
Cabinet Memorandum  
Campaign [Anderson/Lucy]

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Campaign (Carter Record)  
Campaign 1978 - Congressional  
Campbell, Wallace (Inflation Paper)  
Canada  
Candidates for Committee  
Care Labeling  
Carter/Mondale Campaign - Briefing - Travel Policy  
[Carter Speaks on the] Environment  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Chamber of Commerce XR-NC Citizen's Association File  
Child Nutrition  
Child Nutrition Amendment 1978  
China  
Cholesterol  
Chrysler Issue  
Citizen Travel  
Civil Aeronautics Board  
Civil Rights Reorganization - Equal Pay Act  
Civil Service Reform  
Class Action (Ed Cohen's File)  
Clearance Requests and Notice for Consumer Action Update  
Clearances [White House Gate Lists] [1]

**Container 8**

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Clippings - Consumer's Resource Handbook  
Clippings - "Dear Consumer"  
Clippings on Esther Peterson  
Cocoa Agreement - International Agreement  
Comments on Buying Alert  
Comments on Handbook  
Common Cause  
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**Container 9**

Community Nutrition Institute

Community Nutrition Institute Report  
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Congratulations by Esther  
Congratulations to Esther  
Congress Watch  
Congressional Comments on Handbook  
Congressional “Thank You’s” - Legislation  
[Consumer Affairs] Briefing Packages  
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Consumer Complaints A-E  
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Consumer Education  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Groups  
Consumer Information Center  
Consumer Involvement in Federal Agencies - Study by Mike Kerr  
Consumer Issues  
Consumer Law Center, Boston, Massachusetts  
Consumer Message

### **Container 12**

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Consumer Wrap-Up, 1978  
Consumerism at the State Level  
Consumers for Carter/Mondale  
Consumer’s Complaint Report



**Container 13**

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Consumers Union  
Consumers for World Trade "Of Consuming Interest"  
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Corporate Abuses  
Couponing  
Coupons  
Credit Control Act of 1969 - Meeting with National Consumer Finance Association  
Credit and Insurance  
Credit - Women  
Daily Calendar Sheets, 12/77 - 12/78 [1]  
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Daily Calendar Sheets, 1979 [1]

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Daily Calendar Sheets, 1980 [1]  
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Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1978 [1]  
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Daily Telephone Message Sheets, 1978 [3]  
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Danforth, Sen. John C.

Davis - Bacon [Act]  
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Economy - Credit  
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Economy - Inflation  
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Energy - Consumer Group Meeting, 4/78

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National Coalition for Consumer Representation  
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Washington, D.C. - Commerce Department (Meeting on Agency for Consumer Advocacy) 4/15/77  
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Washington, D.C. - Steelworkers of America, 5/9/77  
Boston, Massachusetts - Good Day (Cancelled) 5/10-11/77  
Washington, D.C. - Women's National Democratic Club, 5/12/77  
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 Portland, Maine - Maine Media Women, 5/21/77  
 New Orleans, Louisiana - National Center for Resource Recovery (Board Meeting) (Cancelled) 5/24/77  
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 Cambridge, Massachusetts - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 7/28/77  
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 Testimony, Portland Oregon, Commission on Federal Paperwork, 8/8-9/77  
 Indianapolis, Indiana - Congressman Fithian/Esther Peterson Forums, 8/10-11/77  
 Baltimore, Maryland State and D.C., AFL-CIO, 8/31/77  
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 Washington D.C. - Newsweek Forum on Emerging Issues, 9/14/77  
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 Washington D.C., EOB - Out of Town Editors, 9/16/77  
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 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Bill Signing at White House, 9/20/77  
 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Press Club Awards, 9/20/77  
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 Boston, Massachusetts - Stop and Shop, 9/24/77  
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 New York, New York - Stan Cohen's Luncheon/Columbia University, 10/5/77  
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Washington, D.C. - Paper Converters Association, 10/11/77  
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 National commission on Confidentiality of Health Records (Cancelled) 10/13/77  
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 Washington, D.C. - British Luncheon, Director General of Fair Trading [Empty] 10/19/77  
 New York, New York - National Council of Women of the U.S.A. (Cancelled) 10/20/77  
 Hammond, Indiana - Hammond Jackson Women's Club, 10/23/77  
 Cabinet Room, White House - Columnists Briefing, 10/28/77  
 Detroit, Michigan - Adult Education Association of the United States, 10/29/77  
 Jacqueline Kennedy Garden Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, 11/2/77  
 Cincinnati, Ohio - 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting National Council of Social Security Management Association (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
 Washington, D.C. - National Warranty Upstate Conference (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
 Washington, D.C. - Women in Business Seminar (Cancelled) 11/3/77  
 Washington, D.C. - Office of Consumer Education Health, Education, and Welfare, 11/10/77  
 Atlanta American Marketing Association (Cancelled) 11/14/77  
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 Atlanta, Georgia - Metric Council Board Meeting (Cancelled) 11/16/77  
 Fairfax, Virginia - National Council of Jewish Women, 11/16/77  
 Houston, Texas - International Women's Year, 11/18-19/77  
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 National Consumer League Reception, Herb Block Presentation to Esther Peterson, 12/1/77  
 Washington, D.C. - National Consumers League Reception, 12/1/77  
 Washington, D.C. - Chemical Specialists Manufacturing Association, 12/5/77

Washington, D.C. - Food and Drug Las Institute, 12/13/77  
Washington, D.C. - International Women's Year, White House w/President, 12/14/77

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Washington, D.C. - American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, 12/15/77  
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Edie Fraser International Club, 1/11/78  
Consumer Leaders Meeting with Esther Peterson and President, 1/18/78  
Consumer Federation of America, 1/20/78  
Washington D.C. - Washingtonian Award, 1/20/78  
White House Breakfast with Agency Consumer Heads, 1/24/78  
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New York, New York - Cooperatives Extension's Food Policy Conference, 2/2/78  
Colorado Springs, Colorado - Food Industry Convention (Cancelled) 2/6/78  
Washington D.C. - Good Morning America Show (Cancelled) 2/7/78  
Rosslyn, Virginia - Planning Executives Institute Seminar (Tina Hobson) (Cancelled) 2/8/78  
Dr. Martin Floch Meeting, Nutrition Today, 2/13/78  
Washington D. C. - Journalism Center, 2/15/78  
Bob Landon, Vice President Glenby International Marketing, 2/16/78  
Consumerists Briefing on Economic Package, 2/16/78

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Washington D.C. - Rural American Women, 2/24/78  
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Laurel, Maryland - Consumerism in the Administration, 3/2/78  
Huegren Visit, International Council of Swedish Industry (Cancelled) 3/2-3/78  
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National Issue Seminar B-338 (Cancelled) 3/10/78  
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Scottsdale, Arizona - FMI Advertising Executives Conference, 3/20/78  
Philadelphia, PA - Temple University, 3/23/78  
Yale Political Union (Cancelled) 3/27/78  
Akron, Ohio - 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women's Day (Cancelled) 3/28/78  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Information Energy Briefing, 3/30/78  
United States Metric Board, Swearing-In Ceremony, Vice President's Office, 3/31/78  
Metric Council Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Did Not Attend) 4/4/78  
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Cedar Rapids, Iowa - workshop on Federal Services for Iowa Women (Cancelled) 4/8/78  
Esther Peterson Scholarship, Howard University, 4/12/78  
State Department Meeting - Rome De Briefing, 4/12/78  
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Hartman, New York - American Assembly, Columbia University, 4/14/78

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National Center for Resource Recovery Board of Director's Meeting, 5/4/78  
Tokyo Bar Association, 5/6/78  
Madison, Wisconsin - Helen Nelson, 5/10/78  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 5/13/78  
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Syracuse, New York, Midge Shubow, 5/17-22/78  
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Salt Lake City, Utah - Westminster College, 5/26/78  
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Dallas, Texas - Institute of Food Technology (Cancelled) 6/6/78  
Washington, D.C. - Mt. Vernon College, 6/6/78  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Affairs Workshop, Congressman Maguire, 6/12/78  
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Interagency Council on Citizen Participation Membership Meeting Room 2230 Department of Transportation, 7/20/78  
Dispute Resolution Act, 7/21/78  
Future Business Leaders of America, 8/1/78  
Subcommittee on Nutrition Senate Agriculture Committee, 8/9/78  
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Brigham Young University Washington Seminar, 8/16/78  
Briefing Notes for Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, 8/17/78  
Economic Regulatory Administration U.S. Department of Energy, 8/22/78  
Meridian, Mississippi Annual Labor Management Services, 8/24/78  
Long Beach, California - Retirement Fair for Congressman Hannaford, 8/26/78  
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National Town Hall Meeting (Cancelled) 8/31/78

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Corning, New York - Action Line Conference, 9/18/78

Washington, D.C. - United States League of Savings Association Lawyers Club, 9/19/78

Hartford, Connecticut - State of Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, 9/21/78

Raleigh, North Carolina - North Carolina Consumer Council, 9/23/78

Meridian, Mississippi - Annual Labor Management Services, 9/25/78

Mississippi State University Commission on the Status of Women, 9/26/78

Houston, Texas - American Automobile Association, 9/27/78

Subcommittee on Dairy and Poultry Committee on Agriculture, 9/28/78

Washington, D.C. - National Conference on Citizen Participation, 9/30/78

Dallas, Texas - Southern Methodist University, 10/4/78

Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Washington Hilton Hotel Keynote Speaker, 10/5/78

Albany, New York - University of the State of New York, 10/17/78

Washington, D.C. - Cooperative League of the USA Co-Op Forum, 10/24/78

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St. Paul, Minnesota - Office of Consumer Service Conference, 10/26/78

Amsterdam, Netherlands - World Conference on Vegetable Food Protein (Cancelled) 10/29-11/3/78

St. Louis, Missouri - Inflation Workshop, 11/1/78

Hartford, Connecticut - Inflation Workshop, 11/8/78

Meeting with Consumer Leaders, 11/9/78

Columbia University Club Lunch Speaker International Club, 11/13/78

National Council on the Aging, Inc., 11/14/78

Washington, D.C. - National Citizen Participation Council, 11/14/78

Baltimore, Maryland - John Hopkins University, 11/15/78

Washington, D.C. - American Civil Liberties Union, - Roger Baldwin, 11/15/78

Agricultural Outlook Conference for 1979, 11/16/78

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Salt Lake City, Utah - National Family Week with President Carter, 11/27/78

Bangor, Maine - Northeast Combat Dinner Meeting (Cancelled) 12/2/78

Press Conference on Troubled Asset Relief Program Report, 12/7/78

Memphis, Tennessee - Democratic Party's Mid-Term Conference, 12/8-10/78

Washington, D.C. - Telecommunications Conference, 12/11-28/78

Baltimore, Maryland - People Are Talking, 12/18/78

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Atlanta, Georgia - Advertising Law Conference of the University of Alabama, 1/26/79

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Arlington, Virginia- Northern Virginia Press Club, 2/23/79  
Washington, D.C. - Radcliffe Centennial Symposium, 3/3/79  
Washington, D.C. - Inter-Agency Consumer Complaint Meeting, 3/8/79  
Birth Centennial of Dr. E.V. McCullum, National Academy of Science, 3/9/79  
White House Fellows President's - Commission on White House Fellowships, 3/15/79  
National Academy of Science Report of Food Additives, 3/23/79  
Boston, Massachusetts - Americans for Energy Independence and State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Boston, 3/26/79  
Energy Options Briefing, 3/28/79  
Testimony Submitted - Amtrak Route, 3/28/79  
St. Louis, Missouri - National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, 3/29/79  
National Consumer League Dinner, 4/3/79  
Washington, D.C. - American National Metric Council, 4/4/79  
White House Family Theater - Breneau College Alumnus, 4/6/79  
Washington, D.C. - AFL-CIO Conference on Prices at Sheraton Park Hotel, 4/9/79  
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McMinnville, Oregon - Linfield College, 4/19/79  
Consumer Meeting with Stu Eizenstat, 4/23/79  
Clara Berger's 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday - Women's National Democratic Club, 4/24/79  
Washington, D.C. - Consumer Education Fair, 4/25/79  
Mt. Kisco, New York - Silver Springs Center, "The Dollar Problem", 4/30/79-5/2/79  
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Syracuse University - Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship, 5/21/79  
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4<sup>th</sup> Annual Automotive News World Congress, 7/25/79  
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Federal Faculty Fellows American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, 9/12/79  
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Department of Agriculture Press Conference - Meat and Poultry Inspection Procedures, 9/13/79  
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Council of Jewish Federation, Inc. 11/14-18/79  
Virginia Statewide Conference - Eating System, 11/27/79  
91<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention and Regulatory Symposium, 12/4/79  
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Last modified: 10/31/2017



## **Biographical Information**

### **Esther Eggertsen Peterson**

Esther Eggertsen Peterson was born in Provo, Utah on December 9, 1906. She received an A.B from Brigham Young University in 1927 and an M.A. from Teachers College of Columbia University in 1930. She was a teacher at Branch Agricultural College in Cedar City, Utah and at Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts. During this period she met and married Oliver Peterson. From 1932 until 1939, she taught at Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry. This was a program designed to bring milliners, telephone operators and garment workers onto the campus for the purpose of improving their education. She became a paid organizer for the American Federation of Teachers in New England in 1938. Peterson worked from 1939 until 1944 as assistant director of education of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. She also served as their legislative representative in Washington, DC from 1945 until 1948. She was that union's first lobbyist in Washington, DC. In 1948, the State Department offered her husband a diplomatic position in Sweden. The couple went to Sweden and also spent time in Belgium, where Mr. Peterson served as labor attaché. While in Europe, she became active in the various women's committees of the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions and the International Conference of Free Trade Unions. The Peterson's returned to Washington, DC in 1958.

Esther became the legislative representative of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO upon her return. She retained that position until 1961 when she was appointed Director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor. During the time period from 1961 until 1963, she served as the Executive Vice Chairman of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. President Johnson named Peterson to the newly created post of Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. In addition, she was also Chairman of the President's Committee on Consumer Interests. Ms. Peterson retained both these positions until 1967. In 1979, she became Vice President for Consumer Affairs at Food Giants, Inc. and President of the National Consumers League.

She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1981 and was named a delegate of the United Nations as a UNESCO representative in 1993. She served on the board of directors of several educational and civic organizations. These included the Institute for Public Interest Representation at the Georgetown University Law Center, the Women's National Democratic club, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the National Center for Resource Recovery. Ms. Peterson passed away at her home in Washington, D.C. in 1997 at the age of 91.